



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, April 28, 2004

CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan
202-224-6167

SENATOR CHAFEE SALUTES ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE

WASHINGTON, DC -- In recognition of 56 years of Israeli independence, U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee today submitted the following statement into the Congressional Record:

I rise today to congratulate Israel on 56 years of independence. Last year, I visited Israel in my capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Eastern Affairs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This was my first visit to Israel, and I was tremendously impressed with how much has been accomplished by this tiny country over the last several decades. I also was reminded of how much Israel has suffered at the hands of suicide bombers, who have killed hundreds of Israelis and greatly set back the cause of peace.

In the past, I have expressed disappointment that the United States has not worked harder to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, as well concerns about specific actions by the Israeli government. However, these concerns should not be misinterpreted as a lack of support for Israel or a lack of recognition of the very real threats that she faces. I am strongly committed to the long-term security of Israel, and I will continue to work towards the vision of a safe and secure Israel at peace with her Arab neighbors.

Israelis can be proud of the vibrant democracy that they have created, and I know that many Rhode Islanders share my deep appreciation for the close friendship between our two nations. I once again offer my congratulations and best wishes to the Israeli people.

#####